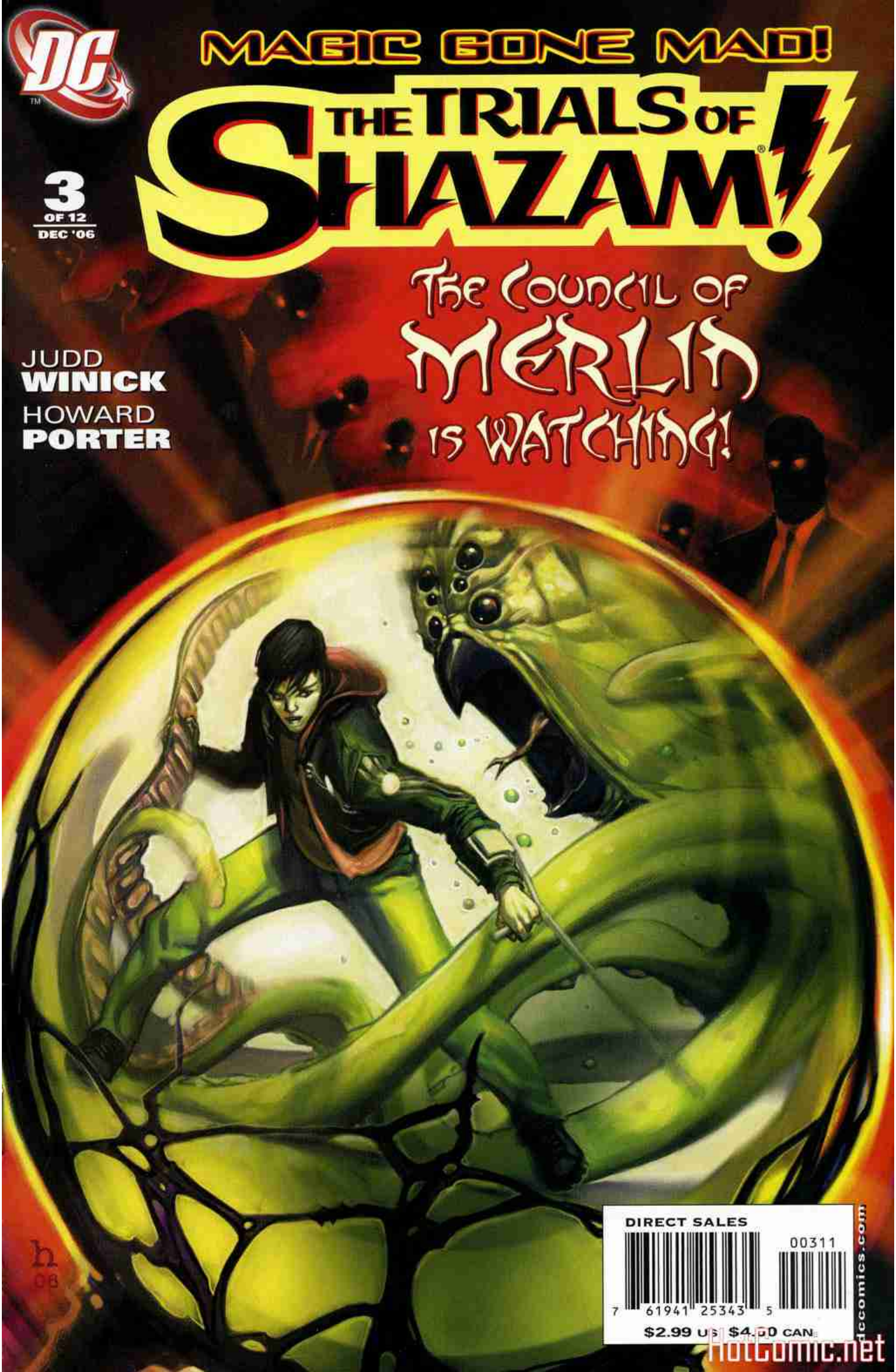
DC
MAGIC GONE MAD!
THE TRIALS OF SHAZAM!
3
OF 12
DEC '06
THE COUNCIL OF MERLIN IS WATCHING!
JUDD WINICK
HOWARD PORTER
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WHAT'S THE PLAN?!
WE'RE GONNA DIE!
THAT'S YOUR PLAN?!
WELL, NO, NOT SO MUCH A PLAN--
--AS A VERY ACCURATE PREDICTION.
THE TRIALS OF SHAZAM PART THREE
COVER ME!
Writer JUDD WINICK
Art & Cover HOWARD PORTER
Letterer: ROB LEIGH
Assoc. Editor: TOM PALMER Jr.
Editor: MIKE CARLIN
MY NAME IS FREDDY FREEMAN. I WAS ALSO KNOWN AS CAPTAIN MARVEL JR.
I WAS A CHAMPION.
BUT THOSE DAYS ARE OVER.
I HAVE TO BECOME SOMETHING NEW.
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AND IT'S NOT GOING VERY WELL.
WHAT ABOUT THAT THING?!
IT'S JUST A GRAVITOX WAND! IT'LL PROBABLY JUST MAKE HIM MAD!!
AS OPPOSED TO THE DELIGHTFUL MOOD IT'S IN RIGHT NOW?!
THIS IS MY "GUIDE," ZAREB. HE WILL LEAD ME THROUGH SOME "TRIALS"...
...AND HOPEFULLY TO A NEW ME.
EXCELLENT POINT.
ZAAK
BEEOOK
BUT SO FAR... THAT'S NOT GOING VERY WELL EITHER.
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SEE!? WHAT DID I SAY!!
AAAAAHH!!
WELL SUE ME FOR TESTING YOUR THEORY WHILE WE--
AAAH!!
DAMN IT TO HELL!
I WAS NOT DESTINED TO BITE IT IN MY FIRST HOUR HELPING SOME USELESS, NEWBIE, MORTAL SACK OF--
AAARGGHH!!
"USELESS"? FINE.
HOW DOES THIS THING WORK!?
IT'LL JUST MAKE ANOTHER DEFLECTION SHIELD! IT--
HOW DOES THIS DAMN THING WORK?!!
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IT'S--IT'S MAGIC!! IT ACTIVATES WITH-- WITH YOUR EMOTIONS--YOUR SOUL--YOUR GUTS!!
GOOD. GUTS I GOT.
HANG ON!! I'VE GOT AN IDEA!!
IF SORCERY WON'T GET US IN THE DOOR--
SHUNK
GREAT. BECAUSE I WAS STARTING TO WORRY.
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--LET'S JUST START WITH SOME OLD-FASHIONED PAIN!
RAAAAAARGH!!!
AND NOW--
SPLORCH
--LET'S SEE HOW IT HANDLES SOME MAGIC ON THE INSIDE!
THEN WE'LL SEE WHO'S USELESS.
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WE GOTTA GO.
DO I HAVE TIME TO, OH, I DON'T KNOW-- SHOWER, BURN MY CLOTHES? MAYBE CALL MY GIRLFRIEND?
NO, WE GOTTA BOOK.
OUR SITUATION SEEMS TO HAVE CHANGED EVEN BEFORE IT'S BEGUN.
THEY TRIED TO HIT YOU WHEN YOU WERE AT YOUR WEAKEST.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
FOR STARTERS, SAY THE MAGIC WORD.
BUT I HAVEN'T GOT ANY POWERS.
YOU'VE GOT A LITTLE SOMETHING. SAY IT.
SHAZAM.
CRA-
KOOM

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SEE? NOTHING.
YOU SURE?
WAIT...
CLANK
THERE YOU GO.
THAT'S ALL I GET?
IT'S WHERE YOU START.
AND IT'S BETTER THAN NOTHING, SINCE SOMEONE IS AFTER YOU.
SOMEONE WHO KNOWS YOU'RE SEEKING THE POWERS OF SHAZAM.
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"SOMEONE WHO IS TRYING TO DESTROY YOU."
WHAT DO YOU MEAN THEY "BLEW IT UP"?
IT'S AN AUDIOM WAR-BEAST, THEY'RE INVULNERABLE.
NOT IF YOU HIT THEM WITH SOME KIND OF INCENDIARY SPELL ON THE INSIDE.
YOU'D HAVE TO IMPLANT IT IN ONE OF ITS ORIFICES. LIKE THE MOUTH OR ONE OF ITS RECTUMS.
ONE OF ITS RECTUMS?
YES. THEY HAVE SIX.
GROSS.
THAT'S NOTHING. YOU SHOULD SEE THEM TRY TO MATE.
THE SMELL ALONE WILL KILL YA.
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AS MUCH AS I ENJOY TALKING ABOUT THE RECTUMS AND REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEMS OF UNDERWORLD DEMONS--
--I'M A TAD MORE CONCERNED THAT MR. FREEMAN IS STILL ALIVE.
WE HAD ONE OPPORTUNITY TO REMOVE HIM WHILE HE WAS STILL VULNERABLE AND UNAWARE.
WHOSE IDIOTIC PLAN WAS IT TO SEND THE DARK MAGIC EQUIVALENT OF AN EXPLODING BOX OF CANDY?
IT WAS ME, TERROM. I THOUGHT--
WHAAA

I AM SICK TO DEATH OF THIS "NEW ORDER"! THE NEW PATH OF MAGIC!
SIX MONTHS AGO I HELD DOMINION OVER A CRYSTALLINE REALM OF BLACK-SLEETED BEZAGOGS.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT REALM IS NOW?!
A SHOPPING CENTER.
WELL, YES.
THAT REALM IS GONE. THE BOOK HAS BEEN REWRITTEN.
THE GODS OF MAGIC HAVE TAKEN NEW FORMS.
THE POWER WE ALL ONCE HELD HAS NOW TAKEN ON A NEW SHAPE.
AND THAT IS WHY WE HAVE CREATED THIS COUNCIL, TERROM.
WE ARE ALL DESCENDANTS OF THE GREAT DEMON NECROMANCER MERLIN.
WE ARE ALL DESTINED TO WIELD GREAT POWER.
IF FREEMAN FAILS.
YES. IF FREEMAN FAILS, THE POWER OF SHAZAM WILL BE OURS.
"OURS?"
THAT'S FUNNY. I THOUGHT IF MARVEL BOY FLOPS, I'D INHERIT THE POWERS OF SHAZAM.
YOU WILL, SABINA. BUT YOU SERVE US.
OH, ABSOLUTELY. I JUST WANTED TO MAKE SURE I GET TO SWING THE BIG BAT.
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Tattoo & Design
I NEED TO GET WHAT?
COVERED. YOU NEED PROTECTION.
THE MAGICAL KIND.
OKAY, I GOT THAT, BUT WHAT DOES IT HAVE TO DO WITH TATTOOS?
THIS IS THE ONE WHO NEEDS TO BE COVERED? YOU'RE KIDDING!
WISH I WAS.
HEY, I'M STANDING RIGHT HERE.
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I KNOW YOU ARE FREDDY FREEMAN. I KNOW WHO YOU ARE. I KNOW WHAT YOU ARE. AT LEAST I KNOW ENOUGH.
AND WHO ARE YOU?
I AM RACHEL ZALLMAN. EVERYBODY CALLS ME ZALLY.
YOU READY TO GET COVERED?
WHICH IS WHAT?
SIMPLY, AN ANCIENT MAGICAL SCRIPTURE WILL BE IMPRINTED ON YOUR SKIN--
--WHICH PROVIDES YOU PROTECTION AND PASSAGE THROUGH MUCH OF THE MAGICAL REALMS.
THAT'S IT?
THAT'S THE SIMPLE ANSWER.
THE MORE EXOTIC ONE, AND TRUER ONE, IS THAT WE WILL BE WRITING ON YOUR SOUL...
...AND YOU MAY NOT SURVIVE.
DO I REALLY NEED TO DO THIS?
NO. ONLY IF YOU WANT TO START YOUR TRIALS.
OKAY. LET'S DO IT.
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TELL ME, FREDDY, HOW DID YOU BECOME CAPTAIN MARVEL JUNIOR?
Ah--ah--ah-- DON'T--DON'T YOU KNOW?
I DO. BUT I'D LIKE TO HEAR IT FROM YOU.
YOU WERE CRIPPLED AND MARVEL MADE YOU HIS ACOLYTE, CORRECT?
I WASN'T ALWAYS CRIPPLED. I--
AAARGH!
"I WASN'T HANDICAPPED... I WAS...I WAS A JOCK. I PLAYED FOOTBALL...
"I RAN TRACK... I WAS...I WAS THE PRESIDENT OF MY CLASS--!!"
"BUT WHAT HAPPENED, FREDDY?"
"I-I-I WAS FISHING WITH MY, MY, MY GRANDFATHER. I LIVED WITH HIM...HE--
AAAAARGH!!"
"HE WHAT, FREDDY?"
"HE TOOK ME FISHING. WE ALWAYS WENT FISHING."
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"AND CAPTAIN MARVEL WAS FIGHTING CAPTAIN NAZI A HALF MILE FROM OUR LAKE.
"CAP LANDED A GOOD ONE AND SENT THE NAZI INTO THE LAKE.
"MY GRANDFATHER--AND I--WE, WE--AAAAAAARGH--WE SAVED THE GERMAN FROM DROWNING...
"HE RETURNED THE FAVOR BY KILLING...MY--MY GRANDFATHER...
"...AND CRIPPLING ME."
AND THEN MARVEL GRANTED YOU A PORTION OF HIS POWERS...
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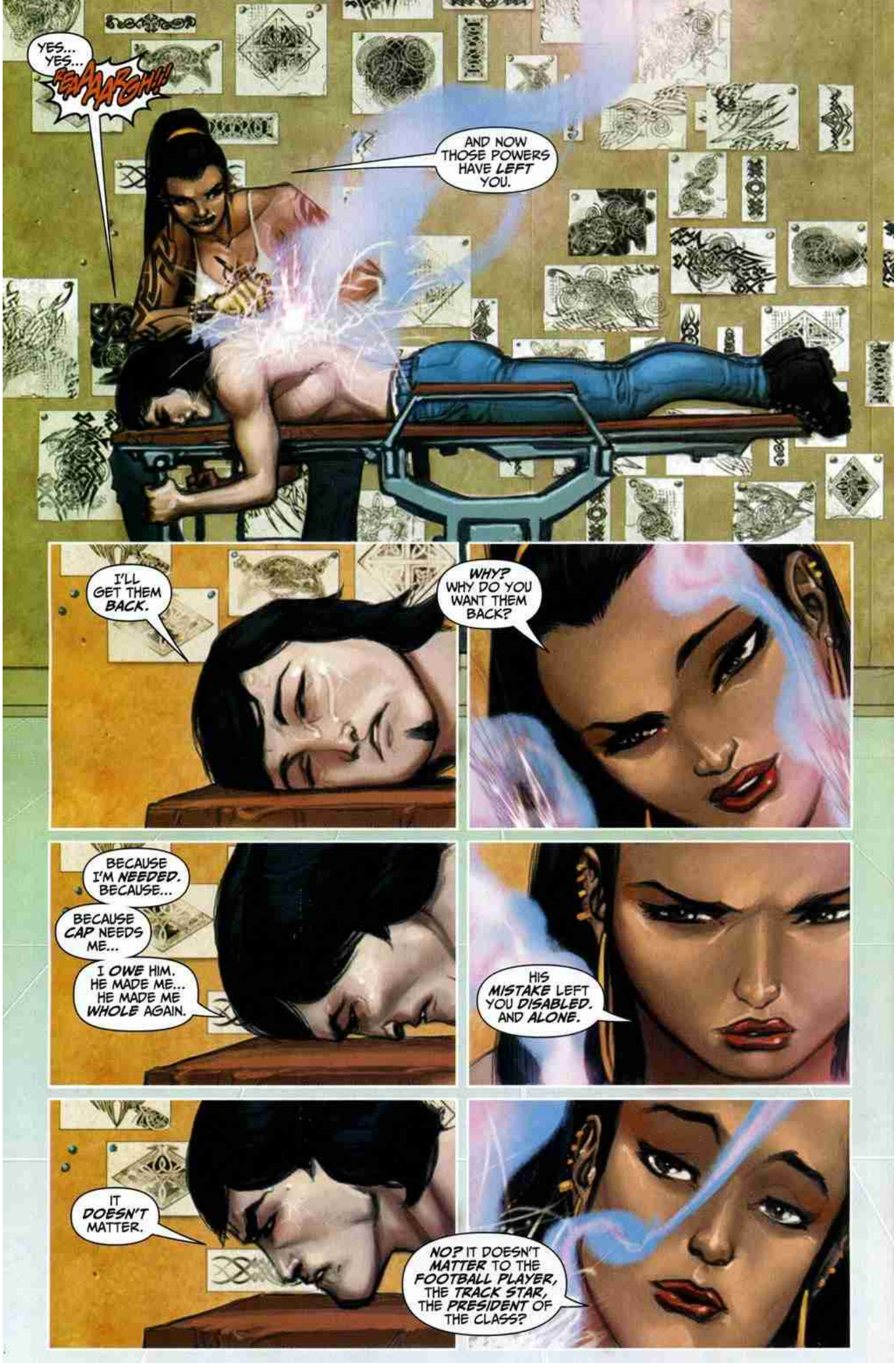
YES... YES...
FSHAAAASH!!
AND NOW THOSE POWERS HAVE LEFT YOU.
I'LL GET THEM BACK.
WHY? WHY DO YOU WANT THEM BACK?
BECAUSE I'M NEEDED. BECAUSE...
BECAUSE CAP NEEDS ME...
I OWE HIM. HE MADE ME... HE MADE ME WHOLE AGAIN.
HIS MISTAKE LEFT YOU DISABLED. AND ALONE.
IT DOESN'T MATTER.
NO? IT DOESN'T MATTER TO THE FOOTBALL PLAYER, THE TRACK STAR, THE PRESIDENT OF THE CLASS?

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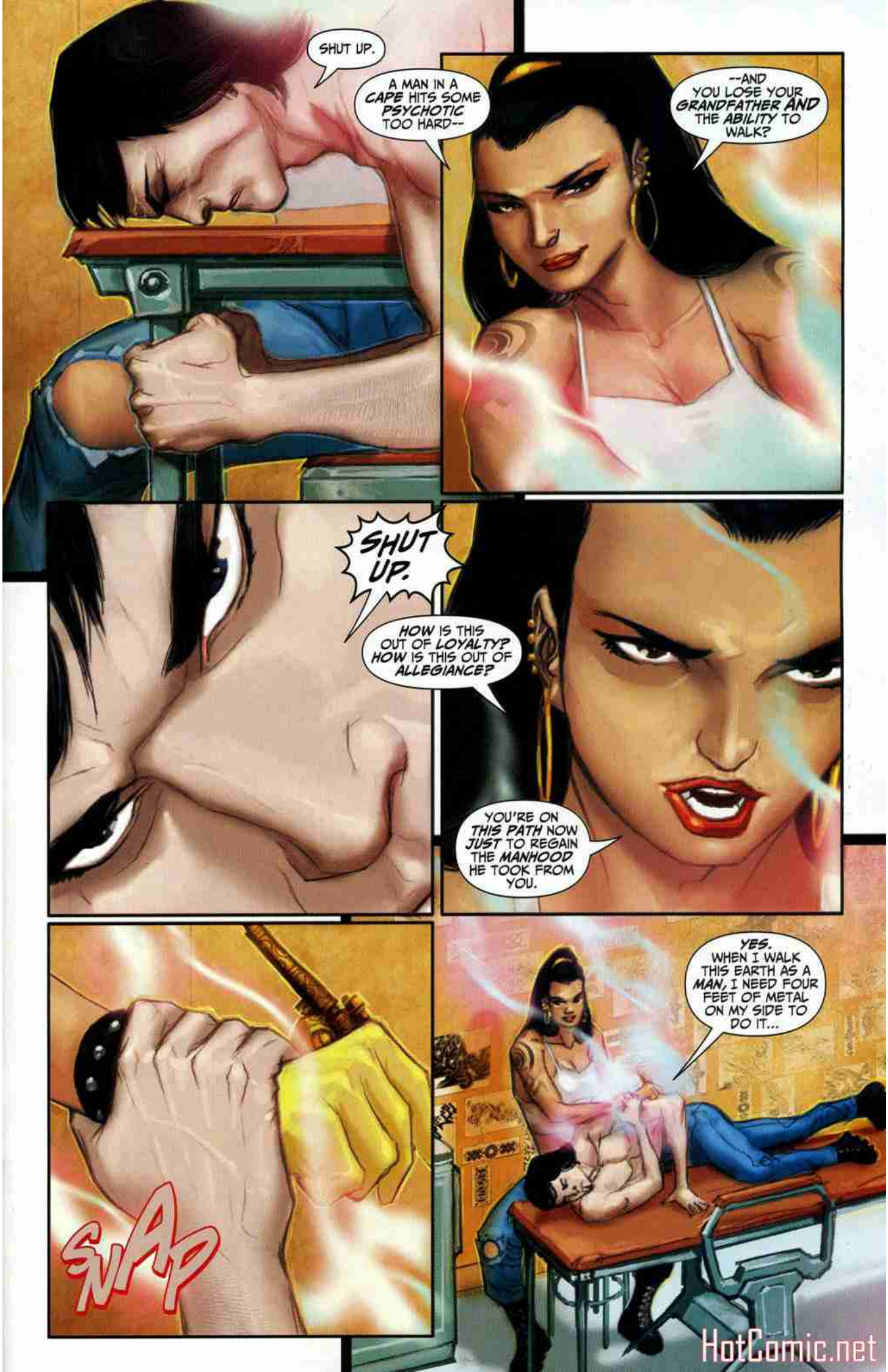
SHUT UP.
A MAN IN A CAPE HITS SOME PSYCHOTIC TOO HARD--
--AND YOU LOSE YOUR GRANDFATHER AND THE ABILITY TO WALK?
SHUT UP.
HOW IS THIS OUT OF LOYALTY? HOW IS THIS OUT OF ALLEGIANCE?
YOU'RE ON THIS PATH NOW JUST TO REGAIN THE MANHOOD HE TOOK FROM YOU.
SNAP
YES. WHEN I WALK THIS EARTH AS A MAN, I NEED FOUR FEET OF METAL ON MY SIDE TO DO IT...
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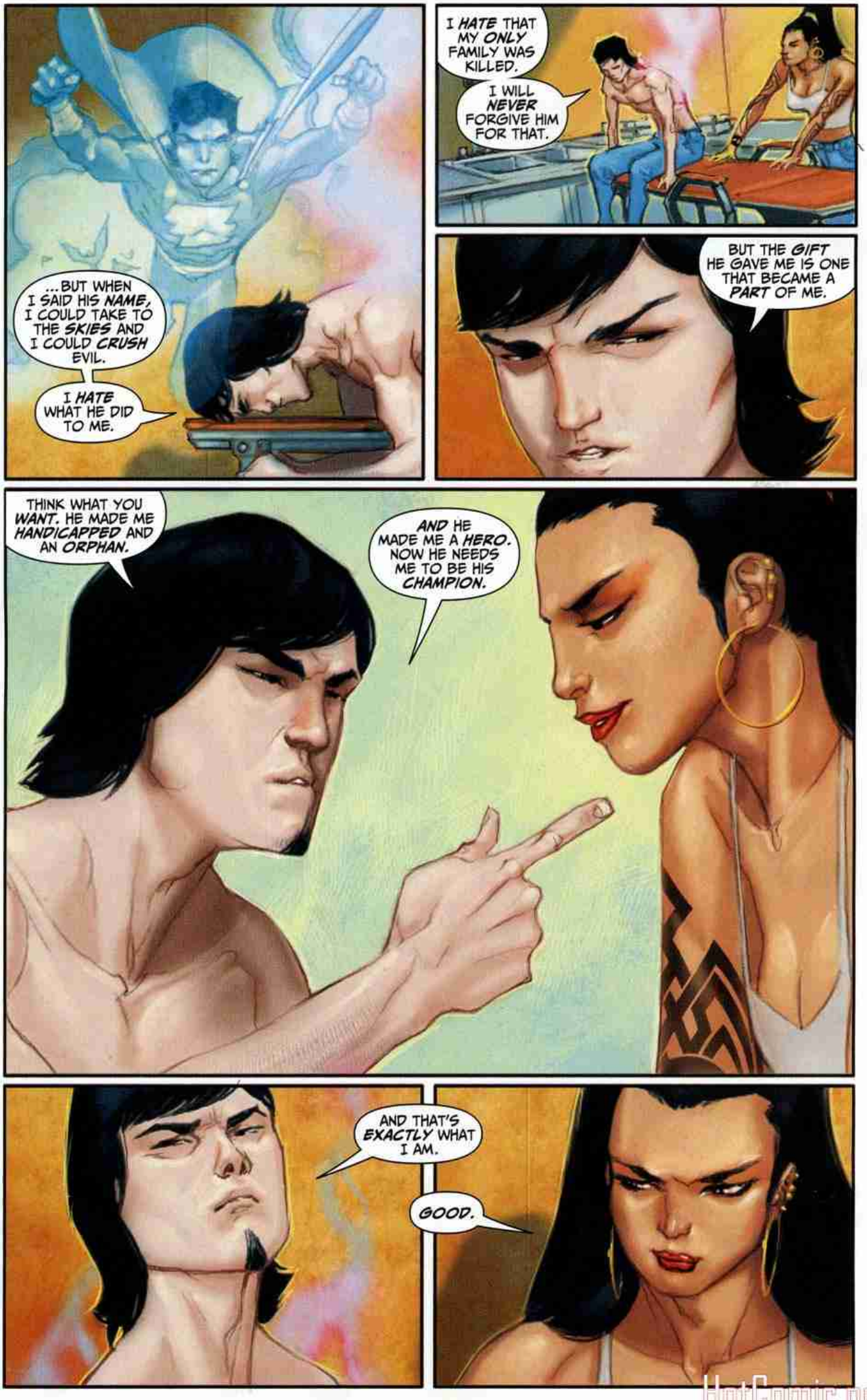
...BUT WHEN I SAID HIS NAME, I COULD TAKE TO THE SKIES AND I COULD CRUSH EVIL.
I HATE WHAT HE DID TO ME.
I HATE THAT MY ONLY FAMILY WAS KILLED.
I WILL NEVER FORGIVE HIM FOR THAT.
BUT THE GIFT HE GAVE ME IS ONE THAT BECAME A PART OF ME.
THINK WHAT YOU WANT. HE MADE ME HANDICAPPED AND AN ORPHAN.
AND HE MADE ME A HERO. NOW HE NEEDS ME TO BE HIS CHAMPION.
AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I AM.
GOOD.
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WE'RE DONE HERE.
THE MARKINGS WILL ONLY BE VISIBLE AND BENEFIT YOU IN YOUR ENCHANTED FORM.
GOOD LUCK, FREDDY. MAY THE POWERS OF THE GODS KEEP YOU.
THAT'S ALL THERE IS?
HARDLY.
TELL ME, MAN... WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO WATCH FOR WITH A COSTELLON GOBLIN?
HOW WOULD I KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT--

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IF...IF...
IF IT'S A COSTELLON GOBLIN FROM THE NORTH SPHERE OF THE GREAT GREEN...
...THEY'RE CHANGELINGS... FROM THE SOUTH, THEY JUST GET BIGGER.
HOW DO I KNOW THAT?
YOU'RE COVERED. YOU HAVE POWER. KNOWLEDGE IS POWER. KNOWLEDGE IS...
WISDOM.
"ZALLMAN... THAT'S YIDDISH FOR SOLOMON."
"YOU NOW POSSESS THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON.
"THE WORLD, THE RULES, THE MANNERS OF MAGIC ARE NOW YOURS.
"WHAT GREATER PROTECTION IS THERE?"
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THE GOD KING SOLOMON IS A WOMAN TATTOO ARTIST IN GREENWICH VILLAGE?
TODAY'S NEW SHAPE FOR AN OLD GOD. AND TODAY...YOU HAVE PASSED YOUR FIRST TRIAL.
BY LETTING HER NEARLY RIP ME IN HALF GETTING THESE TATTOOS?
YES. AND MORE...
YOU STUCK YOUR HANDS INTO THE MOUTH OF A WARBEAST.
SAVED ME.
THEN YOU ENDURED A PHYSICAL AGONY THAT WOULD HAVE KILLED MOST PEOPLE.
AND YOU TOLD THE TRUTH. TRUTH IS POWERFUL MAGIC.
IT IS.
KRA-KOW
AND I GUESS THAT'S A START.
SHAZAM.
NEXT: WAR.
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